

ANOTHER WARNING ABOUT PATCH PIRATE MUSIC

September 26, 2000 (David W. Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org) - The following word of caution about some of the Patch the Pirate music is from Alan Ives, Director of Concord & Harmony (328 Rosalia Street, Oshkosh, WI 54901. 920-231-4807 or 920-235-5400). Brother Ives is a man of God and a Christian musician. Together with his wife, Ellen, he has produced some excellent music albums for God's people. Alan knows music. He is trained both in secular and Christian styles. Before conversion he played in a rock and roll band. The Ives spend most of their time traveling to churches, preaching the Word of God and ministering in music. They are based out of Wyldewood Baptist Church (Box 3143, Oshkosh, WI 54903. 414-235-5400).

I realize that in publishing this mild warning, Brother Ives and I will be branded as unloving, nit-picking, divisive, etc., etc., etc. That was the response from many who should know better when I published "Be Careful about New Patch the Pirate Tapes" on June 14. I have freely advertised Majesty Music albums for years and continue to do so; I appreciate all that Ron Hamilton and Frank Garlock have done to promote wholesome Christian music. But when I issued a mild warning about what I perceive to be a worldly direction in some of their music, I was treated like some sort of an abusive, mean-spirited nutcase. Some charged me with the misguided, often-used but never-defined accusation of "shooting our own wounded." I was criticized for not "following Matthew 18," when in reality Matthew 18 has nothing to do with analyzing published material, which is all that I am doing when I critique Patch the Pirate tapes. If someone publishes material that influences large numbers of people, he should expect to be critiqued publicly. When I did try to communicate with Majesty Music and Ron Hamilton, I was completely ignored by them.

Be that as it will, I intend to continue to lift my voice in warning when I see the world creeping into Christian music. I believe this is a battle worth fighting. The following is Alan Ives critique:

Dear Bro. Cloud:

I have before me most of Ron Hamilton's children's tapes. I am not so sure that he is slipping away, but rather that he has never held the same "position" we have. I hesitate to say anything, and have not said much at the churches, except that I do not recommend every song he has put on tape. We have had his tapes on our table for sale. Our children listened to most of the "Patch" tapes. He has covered important character traits, with great imagination, much variety, and quite a bit of

pirated plagiarism. I could not dream up or produce such a grand volume of children's material. Because we make tapes as well, I could look like a jealous musician. That is not the case, but we have kept guidelines for ourselves to assure that our music does not drift back to my childhood 50's and 60's styles (or earlier.) These are my observations on Brother Hamilton's work, which we took note of, just to remember not to do the same. He has always made use of a light "shuffle," where the 8th notes are uneven, played as a quarter-note, eighth-note triplet throughout the piece. And he has used Caribbean/Latin-American dance rhythms, always in an unobtrusive manner, but still "dance."

1985 - Kidnapped On I-Land: "Will U. Waite" is a very mild "soft shoe." "Do It Now" is calypso-style on the chorus, syncopated like a song from the Caribbean Islands.

1986 - The Great American Time Machine: "The Gratitude Attitude" has mild syncopation in the melody. "The Sunday School Song" is another "soft shoe." In "Good Old-Fashioned Work" it isn't the actual music, but the vaudevillian feeling they give it with a honky-tonk introduction, not to mention making Thomas Edison sound rather dull and stupid.

1987 - Misterslippi River Race: "Ballad of Big Toe" of course, is a take-off from three 60's songs-- "Alley-Oop," "The Monster Mash," and "Big, Bad John."

1988 - The Calliope Caper: Both "He Gives Me Joy" and "Peace Be Still" employ bass beats on the "and" of "2" and the "and" of "4"---60's rock technique---and mild syncopation in the vocal of "Peace..." "I Want To Marry Daddy" and "Skin" use the boogie-woogie rhythm like the old song so many children play on the piano, "Heart and Soul," which is definitely an immoral song. (I have the lyrics.) "Hippo Critter" is more calypso. "Great and Marvelous," which song I like, nevertheless has the title words syncopated. I don't believe all syncopation is wrong, but it sure leads to more bodily emphasis. Literally taken, and stretched to its conclusion if it could be so, "I Want To Marry Daddy" becomes an incestuous wish, though I am sure nothing like that was meant. The old song portraying the same idea was "I want a girl just like the girl that married dear, old Dad." The old song said it right-- "like the girl." Word choices do matter.

1989 - Camp Kookawacka Woods: "Clean It Up" is a Latin-American/Spanish rhumba. "Great and Mighty" - mild syncopation, on the title words again. "The Peanut Butter Song" uses that "ba-boom" bass rhythm, playing on the first and third beats, but adding the "and" of "2" & "4" before each of the aforementioned beats. Very mild swing, but swing it is, same as the boogie.

1990 - The Custards' Last Stand: "Chocolate Fever" is more boogie-woogie, done ever so lightly and cheerfully. "Yours Forever" has a funny line: "then you taught me how to fly" --- you figure it out!?!?

1991 - The Friendship Mutiny: "Walk With The Wise" has syncopation, more than usual for his songs, with a definite 50's feel (chord progressions the same, too.) "Friendship" - soft shoe. "It's Me" - the "Heart and Soul" style always makes the piece entertainment instead of ministry.

1992 - Once Upon A Starry Knight: "Tickle Bug" - (?) feel-good. "Happiness Came Looking For Me" -- The "Heart and Soul" boogie-woogie is a feel-good rhythm, but it is carnal.

1993 - Down Under: The only problem I found here was "Turn Them Into Friends" ---same old "Heart and Soul" boogie.

There are tremendous songs of great value that have come from Ron Hamilton's pen, and who could know the good it already has done, and will do in the future. But even the song, "O Rejoice In The Lord" was "stolen" from the folk-rock ballad "Today." Both in melody and chord structure it is embarrassingly close to that song.

I can remember a day when ten-year-old boys and girls sang "Then I Met Jesus" and "Under His Wings" at junior camps. Today, it's "Wiggle Worm" and "Little By Little." One item not to forget is that though many of the children's songs teach Christian character, that is not the same as praising the Lord, where our song addresses the Lord, or is a prayer, or tells others of the Lord Jesus. We have moved to the left some over the years.

Whatever you might do with these comments is O. K. with me, and you may put my name to them, if there is cause for that. We have taught the same principles over the years and have never named "Patch the Pirate" unless someone specifically asked. My comment always went to state that he is a pirate in his borrowing of tunes and voices, and that some of his songs employed mild syncopation, boogie, and rhumba/calypso/Latin-American dance rhythms. I have appreciated his good songs very much. I am not being picky, but discriminating; no malice or slander, just a categorizing of some rhythms. There are worse offenders all around; your e-mail prompted my comments.

In Jesus' Love,

Bro. Alan J. Ives
July 18, 2000

A video presentation titled HOW TO TELL THE RIGHT KIND OF MUSIC by Alan Ives is an excellent overview of Christian music. The video was recorded during one of Brother Ives' presentations in which he masterfully uses the piano and guitar to illustrate good and bad music. Any church which could get a meeting with Brother Ives would greatly benefit. Very few Christians can properly identify the characteristics of spiritual and unspiritual music. We would urge every Christian family and every Bible-believing church to obtain the video and use it from time to time to reinforce the importance of good music. To our knowledge, there is no other single hour-long presentation which is as effective as "How to Tell the Right Kind of Music" by Brother Ives. Park Meadows Baptist Church, 800 Memorial Park Rd., Lincoln, IL 62656. 800-500-8853 (orders), <http://www.wyldewood.org/cah/> (web site).

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